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SUBJECT: TIP IN TURKEY: TURKISH MEDIA ATTENTION, February 16-28, 2006

1. In response to G/TIP inquiries, national and international media sources published the following news articles about TIP in Turkey. Text of articles originally published in Turkish is provided through unofficial Embassy translation.
2. Published by the Turkish Daily News on Sunday, February 19:

TITLE: Turkey's robust action against migrant smuggling bears fruit

BEGIN TEXT: No vessels used Turkish waters to smuggle migrants to Western countries in 2004, a clear indicator of Turkey's success in preventing migrant smugglers from entering its waters, says Interior Ministry report.

Through national measures, exchange of information and cooperation at an international level, Turkey has determinedly been combating migrant smuggling, with thousands of migrant smugglers and illegal migrants apprehended last year in a series of operations carried out by the country's security forces.

A total of 57,428 illegal migrants and 6,174 migrant smugglers were captured in Turkey by security forces in 2005, according to a report on migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The 17-page report was drafted by the Interior Ministry to be submitted to European Union countries.

Turkey is a transit, destination and also a source country in the movement of illegal migrants, who voluntarily leave their native countries due to poverty and unemployment. Each year, thousands of illegal migrants from Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe attempt to sneak into Turkey, an entry point to more prosperous Western countries.

Since the early 1990s, Turkey has been a transit country in the movement of illegal migrants from, especially, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran and Bangladesh. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the country has been targeted by migrants from Romania, Russia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Additionally, Turkey is also a source country for Turkish citizens who attempt to illegally enter Western countries.

As a result of the security forces' robust action, particularly in 2000 and 2001, a decrease has been observed in the number of illegal migrants using Turkey and migration paths were diverted to other international routes such as the Middle East, Caucasus and Eastern Europe, the report said.

Turkey is situated at the crossroads of Asia, the Middle East and Europe and borders eight countries. Thus, the first step to fight human smuggling is measures taken at border gates. Security officials from the Interior Ministry, in addition to custom officials, are in charge of border gates.

In the last six years, Turkish officials prevented 79,844 foreigners who were seen as suspicious or using fake passports from entering Turkey, under the passport law that was amended in accordance with EU legislation to prevent illegal immigration, said the report.

As a country surrounded by 5,000 miles of coastline, Turkey is targeted by illegal migrants using sea routes. However, in recent years smugglers have changed their sea routes because of Turkey's intense efforts to prevent migrant smuggling in Turkish waters. Thus, ships carrying illegal migrants from African countries have begun using routes in Italian and French waters and those migrant smugglers from Sri Lanka and India use Greek Cyprus, Greece and Italy as their main routes, according to information furnished in the report.

The number of boats from Turkey carrying illegal migrants to European destinations (mainly Italy and

France) has considerably decreased. The number was 19 vessels in 2000 and dropped to nine in 2001, two in 2002 and one in 2003. No vessels used Turkish waters to smuggle migrants to Western countries in 2004, a clear indicator of Turkey's success in preventing smugglers from entering its waters, said the report.

In order to prevent migrant smuggling through sea routes, Turkey has formed a list of boats and boat operators that are likely to be involved in smuggling. In case these boats enter Turkey's territorial waters, they are taken under supervision of officials from the Coast Guard Security Command.

This list is regularly updated, but there is also a need for cooperation with the Greek government to identify suspicious boats, said the report. Illegal smuggling poses a threat to Turkey's social order, its human and democratic values. For public order and safety, it is vital to keep apprehended illegal migrants in a shelter until they are deported. The process of deportation sometimes lasts months. This is a development that sometimes results in the release of the migrants, some of whom later commit crimes in the country such as theft and extortion.

In the last 10 years, a total of 310,501 undocumented foreigners have been deported on grounds of being involved in theft, extortion and smuggling and almost YTL 8.5 million (approximately \$7 million) has been spent since 1999 for deportation transactions and for providing illegal migrants with shelter until they are deported, according to the report.

There are ongoing efforts to establish sheltering centers to "temporarily keep captured illegal migrants within the country," but Turkey believes that in order to combat illegal smuggling in an effective manner, it is crucial to send the migrants back to their home countries, said the report.

As a major transit point in the movement of illegal migrants on the East-to-West axis, Turkey has to deal with this ever-increasing problem at both the administrative and legal levels.

Combating migrant smuggling under a legal framework and in compliance with international standards and norms is among Turkey's top priorities. To this end, the government adopted various international conventions regarding the struggle against cross-border crimes. With an amendment to the new penal code, which has been in effect since June 2005, individuals involved in illegal migration and human trafficking are subject to severe prison sentences.

The report said, in conclusion, that every state has the right to control its own borders and decide who can enter the country or who cannot, but that migrant smuggling is not a matter that can only be resolved solely through security measures or border controls.

It does not look to eradicate the problem worldwide, but suggests that it may be reduced, which is only possible through international cooperation, according to the report.

#### Human trafficking:

Victims of human trafficking, mostly women and children, are enslaved, under pressure and often under threat of death, which is different from the case of illegal migrants.

Turkey is a destination country for women and girls - usually between the ages of 15-26 - trafficked to Turkey with the promise of jobs, but then forced into prostitution. The vast majority of them come from the former Soviet Union, with 60 percent of all cases from two countries, Moldova and Ukraine.

The country has come a long way in a short period of time in counter-trafficking and has made great strides to combat this crime, raising public awareness and introducing legal provisions to punish traffickers.

As part of Turkey's efforts in counter-trafficking, some 495 individuals were identified as victims of human trafficking in 2004 and 2005, said the Interior Ministry report.

Turkey's efforts in this sphere, closely coordinated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), include training provided to police and gendarmerie officials about facts and characteristics of human trafficking and how trafficking should be handled, as well as providing the victims of human

trafficking with psychological support and rehabilitation and ensuring their safe return. The government has so far provided more than 30 victims of human trafficking with "temporary residence permits." Through legal regulations and amendments to the new penal code, legal actions were taken in 2005 against 379 human traffickers, said the report.

However, human trafficking is a problem which has international dimensions, so there is a need for international cooperation to fight this crime.

Turkey has offered to sign cooperation protocols with a number of source countries to jointly combat human trafficking. In 2004, it signed a deal with Belarus and in 2005 with Georgia and Ukraine. Turkey is expected to conclude a series of protocols with Romania, Moldova, Russia and Bulgaria, added the report. END TEXT.

13. Published by Sudan Tribune on Monday, February 20, 2006:

TITLE: Sudan, Turkey agree to fight terrorism, money laundering

BEGIN TEXT: Sudan and Turkey yesterday signed a security agreement in Khartoum to fight against terrorism, money laundering, illegal immigration, as well as human and drug trafficking, proliferation of arms and ammunition.

The police commissioner, Lt-Gen Mahgoub Hassan Saad, signed for the Sudanese side, while the Turkish police commissioner, Gogha Aydan, signed on behalf of his government.

The agreement stated that there will be security cooperation between the two countries for the prevention of any activity that violates the interests of the two countries, including harboring terrorist organizations, establishment of camps by officials of terrorist organizations of either of the two countries and exchanging information about any crime through diplomatic channels.

The agreement also stated that the Turkish side would train cadres from the Sudanese police on how to combat terrorism, protect public figures and techniques of finding explosives using police dogs. END TEXT.

14. Published by Milliyet, Sabah and Vatan on Monday, February 20:

TITLE: International "slave" gang brought down

BEGIN TEXT: A network which brought women from abroad under the guise of work and forced them into prostitution has been brought down. The gang sold some of the duped women like slaves to other pimps for 2,000 YTL (about 1800 USD) and forced the others into prostitution while under strict control. It was revealed that gang members referred to the women as "cats," in case police were listening in. The alleged gang leader, Ejder Toprak and 22 gang members, one of them a woman, were arrested and the 55 women who were forced to work were saved.

The Public Order Department put together a group of 100 civil police. To save the women and catch the suspects, 17 houses and hotels in seven regions of Istanbul were raided at the same time. An unlicensed gun, 97 counterfeit 20 YTL banknotes and 500 grams of narcotics were seized at Ejder Toprak's residence.

They gathered them with advertisements. According to officials, the gang worked like this: they gave advertisements saying, "Wanted: Nannies, models and barmaids to work in Turkey," to different organizations involved in foreign work in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Kazakhstan. Women who applied were sent to Istanbul by plane. A well-dressed person who told them he/she was the "employer" would meet these women at the airport and take them to a house by taxi.

Once inside the house, the women were told that they would be prostitutes and their passports taken away. Any woman who protested would be beaten without mercy in front of the other women. Later these women were given fake Republic of Turkey identification cards.

One night 100 dollars, one "cat" 2,000 YTL

It was determined that some of the women brought were sold to traffickers for 2,000 YTL and the rest were forced into prostitution, in return for \$100-\$150 a

night.

Officials determined that the gang prevented all communication opportunities for these women, and among themselves, the gang members referred to women as "cats."

Three women who were kidnapped by the gang, but who were later released in return for money, were found by the police and they testified. These women identified two captured gang members. END TEXT.

15. Reported by the Pak Tribune on Wednesday, February 22:

TITLE: Pak, Iran, Turkey, Greece sign agreement to stop human trafficking

BEGIN TEXT: The Federal Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Sherpao said that the Interior Ministry has set up a special task force for eradication of human trafficking.

He said human trafficking is an international issue and to this effect Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Greece have signed an agreement to stop human trafficking, while Afghanistan also wanted to join the agreement.

He further said that the government of Pakistan has been able to trace the head of a gang, Arshad Warriach, and his accomplice, Dilshad, in Athens. The gang is allegedly involved in human trafficking.

He also assured that the government would take every possible step to curb human trafficking, and would try all possible efforts to follow in spirit all the proposals deliberated at the conference.

The representative of Canadian High Commissioner, John J. Motranter, the Regional Representative of the National Organization for Migration, Abdul Hassan Mony Mustafa, and Federal Interior Secretary, Syed Kamal, also addressed the conference.

Talking to journalists after the conference, Sherpao said that the house detention of Qazi Hussain Ahmad was carried out due to his aggressive statements, however all the parliamentarians and other people would be released soon.

He said the government wants to formulate a strategy along with the opposition on following the derogatory caricatures published in the European newspapers.

"We have given the permission to MMA to hold a protest demonstration in at H-11 sector, but they were bent on holding the procession at the Blue area," Sherpao said. END TEXT.

16. Published by Sabah on Wednesday, February 22:

TITLE: "Cats" worked; he played

BEGIN TEXT: Ejder T., who is known as "Baron," is a leader of an international prostitution gang that was uncovered by the "Cat Operation" in Istanbul, and was living in luxury with the money he earned from trafficking in women.

Ejder T. was captured on Thursday during an operation conducted by the Morality Police of the Law and Order Department of the Turkish National Police. He brought women from Moldova, Russian and Ukraine to Turkey by promising them jobs. He forced these women into prostitution. He used to spend the money he earned from these women both in this country and abroad.

Ejder T. was detained three times earlier for prostitution. He had many clients. Some famous names were among the list of clients. Special services were given to clients and each woman was available for \$1,000-\$2,000 per night.

Ejder T's name was mentioned two years ago in connection with a prostitution operation in Bodrum. That operation was against Azeri citizen Afag D (42), who was known as the empress of prostitution, and Ejder T. was reportedly her link in Istanbul. END TEXT.

17. Published by Aksam on Thursday, February 23:

TITLE: Prostitution on the other side of the border

BEGIN TEXT: A gang which took nine Georgian women by boat to Greece to force them into prostitution has been captured. A neighborhood census keeper and a manager of irrigation at a housing cooperative were members of this international ring.

The Edirne Provincial Jandarma Command got word that nine foreign women were practicing prostitution in a hotel. In a planned raid on the hotel, nine Georgian women were taken into custody. According to the women's statements, they boated or kayaked across the Meric River and entered Greece illegally, where, starting in Athens, they worked in bars, nightclubs and casinos as prostitutes. The women, who said they had just returned from Greece, were waiting for the right time to go back.

#### Women Freed

The gang members who took these Georgian women to Greece included the hotel owner and businessman E.T., hotel worker S.B., Greek K.X.F., T.B., Ipsala Kumdere Village Census keeper H.K., Ipsala-Pasakloy Cooperative Irrigation Manager C.A.G. and B.E., E.K., I.A., T.Y., S.G. and S.K., who had four different outstanding warrants for his arrest on human smuggling, were all arrested.

Two vehicles that the gang used to smuggle people were seized. Greek citizen V.I. was being sought and the nine Georgian women were released after giving their statements. The 12 suspects were charged with human trafficking, human smuggling and drug smuggling. END TEXT.

18. An Op-Ed written by Ambassador Wilson, published by Zaman on Saturday, February 26:

BEGIN TEXT: Trafficking in Persons: A Human Tragedy that Affects Us All

BEGIN TEXT: One of the most striking features of the 21st century is the extent to which the agenda has become dominated by global issues.

In a world of instant communications, high-speed travel, and burgeoning international trade, problems that once were local or regional have become global. We need look no further than avian influenza and global terrorism to see that solving many problems today requires broad, transnational cooperation among governments, NGOs, and ordinary citizens. Trafficking in persons is another global issue on which we must work together to achieve a global solution.

Trafficking in persons is a crime. It is the exploitation of one human being by another, through sexual exploitation and forced labor. It is a kind of modern-day slavery that violates fundamental rights of freedom and human dignity.

Trafficking is a global scourge that affects nearly every country in the world. It is a problem in the United States. It is a problem in Turkey. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Turkey has become a top destination for trafficking because of its proximity to key source countries and its level of prosperity relative to other countries in the region.

Poverty is a driving force in trafficking. Most victims in Turkey were earning less than \$2 per day in their home countries. One of every three victims in Turkey is a mother who has fallen prey to traffickers in an attempt to feed and clothe her children. The devastating consequences - broken homes, long-term separation, impoverishment, and hopelessness - ruin the lives of mothers and the families they leave behind.

The good news is that many governments around the world, including in Turkey, have taken important steps to combat this problem. The signing of an anti-trafficking protocol by Foreign Minister Gul and Moldovan Foreign Minister Straton is recent evidence of this. Turkey has also signed agreements with other source countries to help facilitate international cooperation against trafficking in persons.

Using funds provided by the United States, Turkey has worked with the IOM to implement a toll-free helpline that has brought immediate concrete benefits to trafficking victims. The helpline, which came into operation in May 2005, offers help to those who need it. Anyone who is a victim of trafficking or knows a victim of trafficking is urged to call "157." Trained counselors stand ready to provide assistance round-the-clock. To date, this hotline has received nearly one thousand trafficking-related calls, and more than 50 people have been rescued from the degradation of human trafficking and reunited with their families through this service.

Earlier this month, the IOM launched a new counter-trafficking campaign in Turkey entitled "Have You Seen My Mother?" Commercial spots featuring Moldovan children will air on television and in cinemas throughout Turkey. Municipalities around the country have put up posters and billboards to raise awareness of the trafficking problem and to encourage citizens to take action against traffickers. The IOM campaign reminds us of the indispensable role the media can play in educating our communities about the tragic results of trafficking, and what can be done about it. Many citizens throughout Turkey are acting to fight trafficking and to rescue its victims.

I applaud the good work being done by the IOM, the Turkish authorities, and other governments and NGOs on this critical issue, and I admire the dedication of all those who fight daily against trafficking in persons in Turkey and around the world. Only by working together can governments, with the support of their citizens, end this insidious form of international crime and restore the dignity of those who have become its victims. END TEXT.

19. Published by Vatan on Monday, February 27:

TITLE: Until now 238 women plucked from the mire

BEGIN TEXT: In order to save foreign women from forced prostitution, a campaign entitled "Have you seen my mother?" began 15 days ago, and, thanks to Selin Arslan, many women have returned home.

Two hundred thirty-eight women forced into prostitution have been saved from the quagmire thanks to the cooperation of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which started the "157" helpline in May, 2005 and the "Have you seen my mother?" campaign which began 15 days ago. Most of the credit for getting this off the ground goes to IOM Turkey Representative Selin Arslan. Arslan works night and day to save women from prostitution. She evaluates each telephone call one by one. According to Arslan, the reason why these women fall into the quagmire in our country is the ease in obtaining visas. Arslan explained how women are saved, "We put information about the 157 helpline in passports at airports. We leave the informational brochures at cafes and hotels. Because of these measures, they call us. When they call, we send the police. We get replacements to the passports that were taken from them."

Three thousand victims in Turkey

According to the IOM report, 40 percent of the trafficked women are found in Istanbul, 16 percent in Ankara and 16 percent in Antalya. The average age of the women is between 19 and 25. Sixty-seven percent of trafficked women in Turkey are from Moldova.

Women saved from prostitution explain

The police saved her in half an hour.

Only 21 years old, Moldovan S.Z. came to Kusadasi hoping to be a waitress, and fell into the prostitution quagmire. S.Z. talks about those bad days and says, "They kept me in a hotel for one month. They said I owed them for the visa fees. They started selling us. I called the Moldovan helpline. They forwarded me to the 157 helpline. Half an hour after I called, the police came and saved us.

I got beat up every night

T.O., who is divorced with two daughters, is another victim. Straight from T.O.'s mouth is what happened to her: "I came to Antalya to be a waitress. They took me straight from the airport to a hotel and locked me in. They took my passport. They kept beating me. One time they put me and six customers in a room. A friend of mine saw a brochure on the 157 helpline and took it. I called and they saved me and my friends.

They even asked me for my cigarette money

A young Romanian woman who worked as a cook and who came to Turkey to earn more money explained: "I was told that I would work as a dancer in Ankara, but they made me a hostess in a bar. The minute I heard about the 157 helpline, I called. The operators coordinated with the police and eight Romanian women and I were rescued." END TEXT.

110. Published by Yeni Safak on Tuesday, February 28:

TITLE: 20 people arrested in prostitution raid

BEGIN TEXT: A Jandarma operation. Mugla Provincial Jandarma Command teams, on claims that foreign women were being forced into prostitution by a prostitution gang, four days ago conducted raids in Marmaris and Beldibi. Twenty-five people were taken into custody and upon interrogation remanded to the court. Twenty suspects, three of them women, were arrested. A warrant for the arrest of an escaped suspect was issued. END TEXT.

WILSON